

STARBLAZER

FANTASY FICTION IN PICTURES NUMBER 260

32p



SUN
PRINCE

We at "Starblazer" want to bring you the very best in Fantasy Fiction. To do that we need your help.

So that we can produce the kind of stories you want to read, please fill in the questionnaire on this page and send it to "Starblazer", D. C. Thomson & Co. Ltd., 185 Fleet Street, London EC4A 2HS.

If you don't want to cut your issue of "Starblazer", you can copy the questionnaire onto a sheet of paper.

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The senders of the ten letters which we judge to be the most informative will each receive one of the prints. We want to hear from you NOW!

Name **Age**

Address

What kind of science fiction do you most enjoy?

Please tick

appropriate boxes.

If you dislike any type of story, place a cross in the box.

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AND DRAGONS	<input type="checkbox"/>	SORCERY
POST	<input type="checkbox"/>	HORROR
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SUN PRINCE

IT HAD BEEN TWENTY YEARS SINCE KING VEYNE D'ANNEMARC HAD SURVIVED THE TREACHERY OF HIS DEMON-WITCH WIFE, SAVING HIS WORLD FROM THE HELLISH INSANITY OF THE CHAOS WORLDS. AFTER TWO DECADES OF PEACEFUL RULE, CRISIS STRUCK.



AS DAWN BROKE OVER ILLONDRE, THE CAPITAL OF ANGLERRE, A GOLDEN FIGURE RACED MADLY TOWARDS THE CITY.

SPARKS FLYING FROM ITS HOOVES, THE HORSE GALLOPED STRAIGHT TO THE PALACE.

DOCTOR VOLORACI!
CAME AS SOON AS I
HEARD! WHAT'S
HAPPENED?

IT'S YOUR FATHER,
PRINCE KURDIS ...!

... I FEAR KING
VEYNE IS DYING!

PRINCE KURDIS D'ANNEMARC OF ANGLERRE, THE SUN PRINCE, RUSHED
AFTER THE COURT PHYSICIAN, HIS WORST FEARS ALREADY PARTLY CONFIRMED.

KURDIS! THANK THE GODS
YOU MADE IT...

GODS ABOVE, FATHER!
WHAT HAPPENED?

A SUDDEN, VIOLENT
CONTAGION — ONE
VOLORAC COULDN'T
DIAGNOSE. I'M SOON
TO BE THE LATE KING
VEYNE, MY SON — AND
YOU'LL WEAR THE
CROWN.

YOU'RE MY ONLY HEIR. RULE
WISELY, MY SON — AND BY THE
LAW. I KNOW MANY DISTRUST YOU,
AND YOUR SORCEROUS POWERS —
BUT SHOW THEM THEIR ERROR! BE
A TRUE D'ANNEMARCI!

CURSE THAT MYROANI
WHY IS THAT WIZARD
NEVER HERE WHEN
HE'S NEEDED?

THE KING'S VOICE TRAILED OFF, AND HE SLUMPED BACK.


THE KING IS DEAD,
LONG LIVE THE KING!

REST IN PEACE,
FATHER. I WILL
REMEMBER YOUR
WORDS!

A WEEK'S OFFICIAL
MOURNING ENDED AT
THE STATE FUNERAL,
WHEN AN ENTIRE REALM
LAMENTED THE LOSS OF
ANGLERRE'S GREATEST
HERO.


LET THE HEIR-
APPARENT SET
THE FIRST
FLAME.





FAREWELL, FATHER.
THE WORLD WILL
MISS THEE!

LIGHTING THE FUNERAL BIER,
KURDIS RELEASED THE SOUL OF
HIS FATHER IN THE CENTURIES-
OLD CUSTOM.



MY COMMISERATIONS ON
THIS SAD DAY, COUSIN. I
HAD FEARED I WOULD BE
TOO LATE.

NO, YOU ARRIVE JUST
IN TIME, BLEYS —
WITH MY FATHER
SAFELY DEAD!

DUKE BLEYS OF SUVETHIA WAS THE
NEPHEW OF PRINCESS MAGETTA, VEYNE'S
SECOND WIFE — AND SO KURDIS'S
STEP-COUSIN. BUT THERE WAS LITTLE
LOVE LOST BETWEEN THEM.

INSOLENT DOG!
YOU'VE HEARD THE
RUMOURS, I
SUPPOSE,
HIGHNESS?

THE SON OF VEYNE'S OLD FRIEND
MYKI SALADOTH, EWAN, WAS AS
LOYAL TO THE PRINCE AS HIS LATE
FATHER HAD BEEN TO THE KING.

THAT THE KING WAS
POISONED? AYE, EWAN —
AND IF I FIND EVIDENCE
THAT BLEYS WAS INVOLVED
I'LL DISEMBOWEL HIM!

LATER, IN THE THRONE
ROOM, CAME THE
PRESENTATION AND
ACCEPTANCE OF THE HEIR
PRESUMPTIVE.

MY LORDS, IT WAS THE
WISH OF THE LATE KING
THAT HIS ONLY SON
SHOULD ASCEND TO
THE THRONE. HOW SAY
YOU ALL?

AYE!

AYE!



ONLY ONE VOICE SPOKE
OUT AGAINST THE MOTION.


A MOMENT I PRAY, MY LORDS! I HAVE
HERE A COPY OF THE CONVENTION OF
DUNOOR — DRAWN UP BY KING
VEYNE'S OWN FATHER, IAGON, AFTER
THE SORCEROUS WARS LEFT OUR
LANDS RIFE WITH DEMONS AND
WITCHERY. IN IT, YOU RECALL, IS
DECREED THAT ONLY A TRUE HUMAN
MAY ASCEND THE THRONE OF
ANGLERRE!

IS IT NOT TRUE THAT
PRINCE KURDIS IS THE
SON OF CIRLE
SORCERESS? IS IT NOT
ALSO TRUE THAT OUR
PRINCE EXHIBITS
POWERS FAR BEYOND
ANY MORTAL?

BY LAW — DECREE
WRITTEN BY THE
D'ANNEMARC FAMILY
ITSELF — KURDIS CANNOT
BE CROWNED KING OF
ANGLERRE! I SAY BANISH
HIM FORTHWITH AND
SELECT THE NEXT IN LINE!

A GREAT TUMULT BROKE OUT
DROWNING OUT THE DUKE.

THEN AN AWFUL VOICE RANG OUT.



SILENCE! IS THIS THE COURT MY FATHER RULED? IF BY LAW I AM UNFIT TO RULE, THEN SO BE IT — I HAVE SWORN TO MY FATHER TO UPHOLD THE LAW — BUT THINK WHO WILL GAIN MOST BY THIS DEED! MAKE YOUR CHOICES...

... MAY YOU LIVE TO NOT REGRET THEM!

HIS BODY A BLINDING ARROW, KURDIS HURLED UP AND AWAY FROM THE THRONE ROOM.



AND THAT, MY LORDS, PROVES
MY POINT ADMIRABLY, I THINK.

SMILING HAPPILY TO HIMSELF,
DUKE BLEYS LEFT THE THRONE
ROOM, UNNOTICED AMIDST THE
UPROAR.


SOME TIME LATER, A DEJECTED
KURDIS SAT BROODING IN THE
FOREST OF KALIDON, FAR FROM
ILLONDRE, WHEN HIS THOUGHTS
WERE DISTURBED.

WHO'S THERE?

ONLY ME, HIGHNESS. I
THOUGHT I'D FIND YOU OUT
HERE.

EWAN! PERHAPS BLEYS IS
RIGHT — A CREATURE
WHO CAN DO THIS IN
PIQUE IS NOT FIT TO
RULE.

EWAN DISMOUNTED, AMIDST THE SMOKING CARNAGE CAUSED BY KURDIS IN HIS TEMPER, AND LED THE NERVOUS HORSES TO THE SITTING PRINCE.



MAY THE GODS ENSURE I'M NOT HERE WHEN YOU GET ANGRY THEN, HIGHNESS! I'D RATHER YOU'D DONE THIS TO BLEYS, BUT THAT WOULD ONLY HAVE STRENGTHENED HIS CASE — THOUGH HE'D NOT BE AROUND TO APPRECIATE IT.

WHAT'S THIS?

I CAN'T BE WATCHING YOUR BACK ALL THE TIME, HIGHNESS. A POOR, WEAK EXILE LIKE YOU NEEDS A SWORD.


WHAT DO YOU MEAN — YOU CAN'T BE WATCHING ME ALL THE TIME?

WHEREVER YOU'RE GOING, HIGHNESS — SO AM I. I COULDN'T STAY TO WITNESS BLEYS' TRIUMPH ANYWAY.



BACK IN ILLONDRE, DUKE BLEYS MOVED
UNSEEN THROUGH THE CITY, UNTIL HE
REACHED A DARK HOUSE IN A DESERTED
STREET.


FYLORIX? ARE
YOU HERE?



WHERE ELSE WOULD I BE, MY LORD? AND HOW WAS YOUR FIRST DAY AT COURT?

BETTER THAN I HAD HOPED, FYLORIX. KURDIS TOOK EXILE— BUT HE GREW SO ANGRY HE LOST CONTROL, AND FRIGHTENED THE POOR SHEEPISH MINISTERS MORE THAN ANY WORDS OF MINE. AS THE NEAREST KIN TO VEYNE, IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE I'M OFFERED THE CROWN.

BLEYS APPROACHED THE SORCERER.




BEFORE VEYNE RALLIED
THE ARMY AND DEFEATED
SUBARAX, MY LATE
COLLEAGUE ALMOST
OVERTHREW ANGLERRE —
MAKING IT PART OF OUR
GROWING SORCEROUS
EMPIRE.

AYE — AND EVER SINCE,
SUVETHIA HAS BEEN A
WEAKENED POWER, ALMOST
PART OF ANGLERRE ITSELF WITH
ALL HER SORCERERS BANISHED.

BUT ONCE I AM KING, WE
SHALL SEE A REVERSAL OF
THAT ROLE! ANGLERRE
WILL BE THE PUPPET —
SUVETHIA GREAT ONCE
AGAIN!

DON'T BE OFFENDED BY THE
QUESTION, HIGHNESS, BUT I'VE
OFTEN WONDERED — HOW DOES
IT FEEL TO HAVE SUCH POWER AS
YOU POSSESS?




EVER A CURSE, EWANI
SINCE DESTROYING
CERASTES AND
SOMEHOW ABSORBING
HIS GOLDEN BODY INTO
MINE, I HAVE KNOWN
POWERS AND THINGS
NO HUMAN COULD
POSSIBLY
UNDERSTAND.

WITHOUT WARNING, TWO MIS-SHAPEN GIANTS APPEARED
BEFORE THEM, PANICKING THE HORSES.



BY THE GODS!
WHAT ARE THEY?



FAVOYRA! I HAD
THOUGHT THEM LONG
EXTINCT! BEWARE THE
ONE WITH THE SINGLE
EYE ...



... FOR ITS GLANCE
WILL FREEZE ANY
LIVING CREATURE!

AS EWAN LEAPT CLEAR HIS UNFORTUNATE HORSE WAS CAUGHT
IN THE WITHERING GLANCE, AND FROZE INSTANTLY.

STEEL IS USELESS AGAINST THEIR HIDE! SOMETHING STRONGER IS NEEDED.

ALMOST
UNCONSCIOUSLY, KURDIS
SUMMONED UP HIS
SORCEROUS POWERS...

... AND HE WROUGHT A TERRIBLE TRANSFORMATION.

NOW ARE WE ON EQUAL
TERMS, LAST OF THE
FAVOYRAI




THE DEMONIC CREATURE KURDIS
HAD BECOME SMASHED INTO THE
GIANTS.



WHILST BACK IN ILLONDRE,
ANGRY EYES WATCHED.

BALAR AND KRENOS
HAVE FAILED, FYLORIX!
YOU PROMISED ME
THEY WOULD DESTROY
KURDIS EASILY!

OUR SUN PRINCE HAS
GREATER TALENTS
THAN I CREDITED HIM
WITH, MY LORD.



IT WOULD SEEM HE HAS
INHERITED CERASTES'
SHAPE-SHIFTING POWERS
ALONG WITH THE
CREATURE'S GOLDEN
BODY. HIS END WILL COME,
DUKE BLEYS. IT WILL
SIMPLY REQUIRE A LITTLE
MORE THOUGHT.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT
YOU DID, HIGHNESS —
BUT THANK VISHENA
YOU DID IT!

IT WAS A REFLEX,
EWAN — I KNOW NO
MORE WHAT I DID THAN
YOU...

... SAVE THAT AN UNHOLY
GLEE SEIZED ME THE MOMENT I
CHANGED! WAS BLEYS RIGHT
AND MY FATHER WRONG,
EWAN? WILL I BECOME MORE A
CREATURE OF CHAOS AS TIME
PROGRESSES — GROWING,
NOT OLDER, BUT MORE EVIL?

EWAN SALADOH WAS SILENT, UNABLE TO ANSWER THE
PRINCE'S TORMENTED QUESTIONS.

I'LL SEE IF I CAN
FIND YOUR HORSE,
HIGHNESS. IT FLED
IN TERROR DURING
THE FIGHT.


I'LL LEAVE YOU TO
YOUR THOUGHTS,
PYLORIX, AND PRESENT
MYSELF TO THE COURT.
THEY MAY BE READY
TO OFFER ME THE
CROWN, EH?

BACK IN THE MORE POPULOUS
SECTOR OF THE CITY, THE DUKE
RECEIVED AN UNWELCOME
SURPRISE.

AUNT MAGETTA! I
THOUGHT YOU
RETURNED TO
SUVETHIA AFTER THE
FUNERAL.

I WAS ON MY WAY —
UNTIL I HEARD ABOUT
KURDISI WHAT GAME
ARE YOU PLAYING
NOW, BLEYS?






THE LATE KING'S SECOND WIFE, MAGETTA, PRINCESS OF SUYETHIA, SCOWLED AT HER NEPHEW IN DISTASTE.


NO GAME I ASSURE YOU, AUNTIE DEAR. I SIMPLY UPHOLD IAGON'S CONVENTION OF DUNOOR — THE LAW!

AND CAST YOUR OWN EYES UPON THE CROWN. NO DOUBT I WELL, NEPHEW, BE WARNED I SHALL FIGHT YOU IN THIS!



FIGHT ALL YOU WISH, MY DEAR AUNT — THE POISON THAT KILLED YOUR HUSBAND CAN JUST AS SOON RID ME OF YOU!

ON HORSEBACK ONCE MORE, EWAN SEATED ■ A MOUNT THEY HAD BOUGHT IN A MOUNTAIN VILLAGE, KURDIS AND HIS COMPANION RODE THROUGH THE FOOTHILLS OF THE PYARE MOUNTAINS IN ANGLERRE'S REMOTE NORTH.



BY VISHENA, HIGHNESS. I CAN FEEL THIS NAG'S BONES EVEN THROUGH THE SADDLE!



I THOUGHT YOU WERE A SOLDIER, EWAN — USED TO DISCOMFORT.

BUT THE APPARITION WAS NO EVIL CREATURE...

KURDIS? WOULD YOU FLEE
FROM YOUR OWN FATHER?

GODS ABOVE!
MORE DEMONS!

THE HORSES REARED IN TERROR AS THE
SHADOWY FIGURE CAME CLOSER.





FORGIVE ME, FATHER!
THROUGH MY OWN
FOOLISHNESS I HAVE
LOST THE CROWN OF
ANGLERRE, AND FAILED
IN MY OATH TO YOU.

BE AT PEACE,
KURDIS — YOU
SHOULD KNOW THAT
NOTHING BEFALLS A
D'ANNEMARC BY
ACCIDENT. NOW
LISTEN, FOR I HAVE
LITTLE TIME.

YOU MUST JOURNEY TO
THE TALLEST PEAK OF
PYARE, ON FOOT IF NEED
BE, AND THERE WE WILL
BEGIN TO SET MATTERS
ARIGHT. YOUR DESIRES,
AND MY OWN VENGEANCE
WILL COME ABOUT — I
ASSURE YOU.

BUT FOR NOW,
I MUST LEAVE YOU.

FATHER! COME
BACK! FATHER!

THE DEAD KING'S GHOSTLY FIGURE FADED
INTO THE MOUNTAIN MIST, LEAVING
THEM ALONE.

UP INTO THE MOUNTAINS,
IS IT, HIGHNESS?

AYE — THE MOUNTAINS.


IN ILLONDRE, BLEYS HAD BEEN SUMMONED TO APPEAR
BEFORE THE COURT — AND HE ALREADY KNEW WHAT
THEY WOULD OFFER HIM.

WE HAVE SAT LONG AND
THOUGHT HARD ON THE
MATTERS OF THE PAST
DAYS, AND HAVE COME TO
ONLY ONE CONCLUSION.
ANGLERRE MUST HAVE A
KING — AND THE NEXT IN
LINE, AS KING VEYNE'S
NEPHEW BY MARRIAGE, IS
DUKE BLEYS OF SUVETHIA.
HOW SAY YOU ALL?

A DEFIANT CRY ECHOED
FROM THE BACK OF THE
THRONE ROOM.

I SAY THEE, NAY, CHANCELLOR!
OLD LAWS SEEM MUCH THE
FASHION THESE DAYS, SO I
INVOKE THE INTERREGNUM! AS
WIDOW OF THE LATE KING, I HAVE
THE RIGHT TO CLAIM THE
REGENCY FOR NOT MORE THAN A
TWELVEMONTH AFTER THE
KING'S DEATH. I NOW SO DO!





FYLORIX! WE MUST BE RID
OF MAGETTA IMMEDIATELY!
SHE'S MADE HERSELF
REGENT FOR A YEAR — AND
YOU CAN BE SURE DURING
THAT TIME SHE'LL FIND
SOME WAY TO HAVE
KURDIS REINSTATED!

CALM YOURSELF,
MY LORD! I HAVE
RELOCATED OUR
PRINCE AND HIS
FRIEND. AND THIS
TIME, THERE WILL
BE NO ESCAPE.

G'RRNSSII
SSHARNEEI
HHARN'GNAI!

AS THE ALIEN SYLLABLES
FELL FROM THE SORCERER'S
LIPS, A GREAT WIND BEGAN
TO BLOW THROUGH THE
CHAMBERS ...

... AS WELL AS IN A
HIGH PASS AMONGST THE
PYARES.

CHA'TAN TAKE
THIS WIND! IT'S
COLDER THAN THE
DEEPEST DEMON-
PITI!

AYE — IT HAS THE
SMELL OF
SORCERY, TOO!
HAVE YOUR BLADE
READY, FRIEND
EWAN.



I THINK WE ARE
ATTACKED AGAIN!

AS KURDIS SPOKE, A WAVE OF CREATURES
STEPPED OUT OF THE ROCKY WALLS
THEMSELVES.



THEY ARE SHAASSIGNAA,
FROM A WORLD WHERE THE
VERY AIR IS DENSER THAN
ROCK! NOTHING ON THIS
PLANE WILL AFFECT THEM
ANY MORE THAN A BREEZE
DOES US!

ARE THERE NO SPELLS
TO STOP THEM?



THERE IS ONE — BUT I CANNOT
CONCENTRATE ENOUGH TO
RECALL THE RUNES!

AS HE STROVE VAINLY TO WARD OFF THE
SHAASSIGNAA WITH EVERY SPELL HE KNEW,
KURDIS BEGAN TO FEEL THE FIRST STIRRINGS
OF PANIC.

THE PASS BEGAN TO FILL WITH THE ROCK-HARD BODIES OF THE SHAASSIGNAA, PRESSING THE TWO MEN FURTHER BACK AGAINST THE SIDES.



THERE ARE MORE OF
THE THINGS INSIDE THE
WALL ITSELF!

THEY MEAN TO CRUSH
US AGAINST THE ROCK!

AND THEN A MIGHTY BOLT OF MYSTICAL
FORCE SWEEPED THROUGH THE PASS,
CRUMBLING THE SHAASSIGNAA LIKE
DUST.

WE'RE SAVED, BY THE
GODSI BUT BY WHOM —
AND WHY?

AS THE LAST SHAASSIGNAA FELL, A FAMILIAR FIGURE STROLLED INTO THE PASS.

MYRDANI

I MUST BE GETTING OLD — A HUNDRED YEARS AGO I COULD HAVE CLEARED THEM ALL IN ONE MOMENT! AH, WELL. GREETINGS, PRINCE KURDIS AND LIEUTENANT SALADOTH.

MYRDANI BY CHA'TAN'S BLACK SOUL. I THOUGHT THE WORLD RID OF THAT MEDDLESOME WIZARD.



THE DOOR BURST OPEN
SUDDENLY, AND THE PRINCESS
OF SUVETHA MARCHED
ANGRILY IN.

SO THIS IS WHERE YOU
SKULK OFF TO,
BLEYS — AS I GUESSED!
FOR ONE SO KEEN ON
LAW, YOU SEEM TO
FORGET THE PENALTY
FOR ASSOCIATING
WITH A SUVETHIAN
WIZARD!

MERCIFUL GODS!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR
UNTIMELY ENTRANCE,
MADAM, FOR YOU HAVE
GIVEN ME AN IDEA! YOU
WANTED TO BE RID OF
BOTH YOUR AUNT AND THE
PRINCE, MY LORD.

THE TRANSFORMED QUEEN SCREAMED HER
HATRED AND AGONY, CHILLING THE
DUKE'S BLOOD.



I NOW GIVE YOU THE
MEANS TO BOTH!
MINDLESS AND SOULLESS,
WHAT WAS ONCE YOUR
AUNT NOW DESIRES
NOTHING MORE THAN
THE DEATH OF KURDIS!

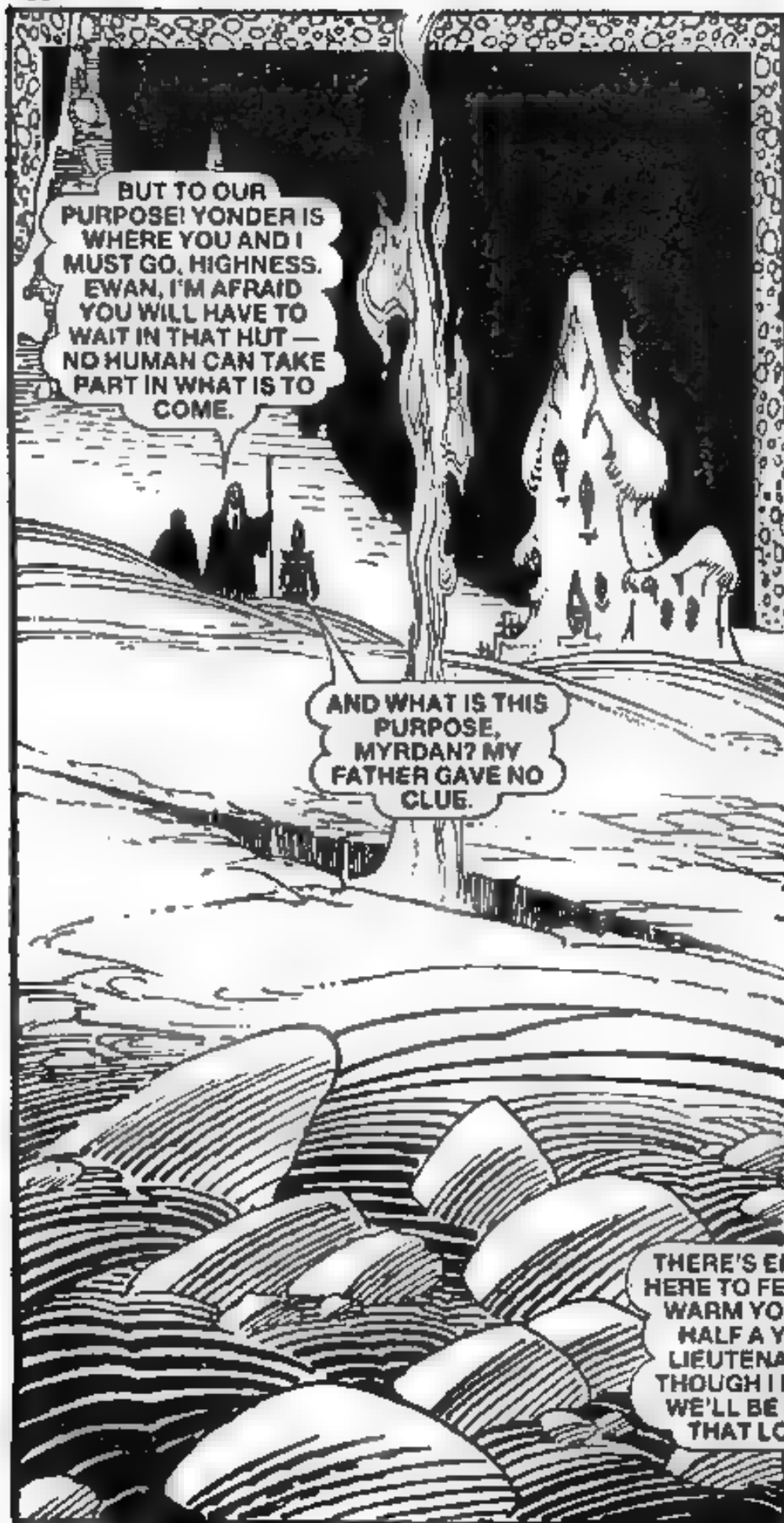
IN THE MOUNTAINS, KURDIS AND EWAN FOLLOWED MYRDAN AS THEY TREKKED HIGHER, INTO THE SNOW-LINE.

I'M GRATEFUL FOR YOUR TIMELY RESCUE, MYRDAN. BUT WHY WERE YOU NOT THERE WHEN FATHER NEEDED YOU?

IT GRIEVES ME MORE THAN I CAN SAY THAT I COULD NOT SAVE KING VEYNE, HIGHNESS. I BEG YOU TO BELIEVE ME!

THERE ARE MANY THINGS IN WHICH I MAY PLAY NO PART. FATE HAS WOVEN HER CLOTH — AND EVEN I CAN'T UNPICK A SINGLE THREAD!

THE INTENSITY OF THE MAGICIAN-SAGE'S WORDS STRUCK A CHORD IN THE PRINCE'S HEART, AND HE FELT A SUDDEN, COMMON BOND WITH MYRDAN.



BUT TO OUR
PURPOSE! YONDER IS
WHERE YOU AND I
MUST GO, HIGHNESS.
EWAN, I'M AFRAID
YOU WILL HAVE TO
WAIT IN THAT HUT —
NO HUMAN CAN TAKE
PART IN WHAT IS TO
COME.

AND WHAT IS THIS
PURPOSE,
MYRDAN? MY
FATHER GAVE NO
CLUE.

THERE'S ENOUGH
HERE TO FEED AND
WARM YOU FOR
HALF A YEAR,
LIEUTENANT —
THOUGH I DOUBT
WE'LL BE GONE
THAT LONG.

WHY — TO MAKE YOU
TRULY HUMAN ONCE
MORE, PRINCE
KURDIS.



THE PRINCE WAS STUNNED
INTO SILENCE.

INSIDE THE SIMPLE HUT,
EWAN FOUND A HUGE
PROVISION OF FUEL AND
SUPPLIES.



AND WHERE
EXACTLY ARE YOU
GOING, MAGICIAN?

AS HE STOOD READY TO ENTER, KURDIS THOUGHT HE COULD SEE A FAINT LIGHT PULSING FAR INSIDE THE CAVERN.

ARE YOU READY, PRINCE KURDIS D'ANNEMARC? THIS WILL BE A RE-BIRTH FOR YOU, AND FULL OF SIMILAR AGONY.

MY LIFE IS TORMENT ALREADY, MYHOAN. AYE — LEAD ON.

THERE IS NO EXACTLY IN THE REALMS THE PRINCE AND I WILL VISIT, EWAN SALADOTH. WE GO BEYOND TIME AND SPACE — TO THE WORLDS OF MIGHT-BE AND NEVER-WILL-BE.

NUMB WITH APPREHENSION AND EXCITEMENT, KURDIS ALLOWED HIMSELF TO BE LED TOWARDS THE GAPING CAVERN.

THEY STEPPED INTO THE CAVERN — A
FANTASTIC SIGHT MET THE PRINCE'S
EYES.

VISHENAI! NOT EVEN IN
DREAMS HAVE I
IMAGINED SUCH AS
THIS!

WE ARE IN A GATEWAY,
HIGHNESS — THERE IS
ALWAYS SOME
OVERLAP.



AND THEN THE
PANORAMA SETTLED, AND
KURDIS FOUND HIMSELF
IN A CRYSTAL BOAT,
SAILING AN OCEAN OF
STARS.

THE ASTRAL PLANE.
TAKE NOTHING AT FACE
VALUE FROM THIS
POINT ON, HIGHNESS.
ILLUSION AND
SYMBOLISM ARE
MASTERS HERE.





OUR FIRST PORT OF
CALL, IT WOULD SEEM.

THE BIAT DRIFTED CLOSER TO THE
WARPED ISLANDS AS THOUGH PROPELLED
BY UNSEEN QARS.

THE BOAT MOVED STRAIGHT TO ONE PARTICULAR ISLAND, AND STOPPED AT THE BASE OF STAIRS CUT INTO THE UNNATURAL ROCK.

WHAT WILL I HAVE TO DO, MYRDAN?

I DO NOT KNOW, HIGHNESS. THERE ARE NO RULES TO THIS GAME.

I KNOW YOU! I KNOW YOU! SADRIC KNOWS, HE DOES!

SADRIC THE FORGOTTEN! ■ THIS ■ OUR FIRST GUIDE — AN ODD CHOICE.

AS THE UNGAINLY FIGURE APPROACHED, KURDIS NOTICED, WITH A TWINGE OF ALARM, THAT MYRDAN HAD DRAWN HIS EBONY RAPIER.



WELL MET, SADRIC. SO
TELL US, WHERE MUST
WE FIRST GO?

THE CASTLE OF THE
ROARING GIANT — OH
YES, I KNOW THAT!
THERE IS A CHALICE OF
GREAT POWER WITHIN,
AND YOU MUST
RETRIEVE IT.



WHAT IS THIS
CHALICE? AND
WHAT MUST WE
DO WITH IT
ONCE WE HAVE
IT?

I... I —
DON'T KNOW!



WHO WAS THAT? AND WHY
IS HE THE FORGOTTEN?

MANY THINK SADRIC WAS
LEFT AT THE ASTRAL PLANE
BY THE GODS TO ACT AS
GUIDE TO ANY WHO
SHOULD BECOME LOST —
AND THEN FORGOTTEN.

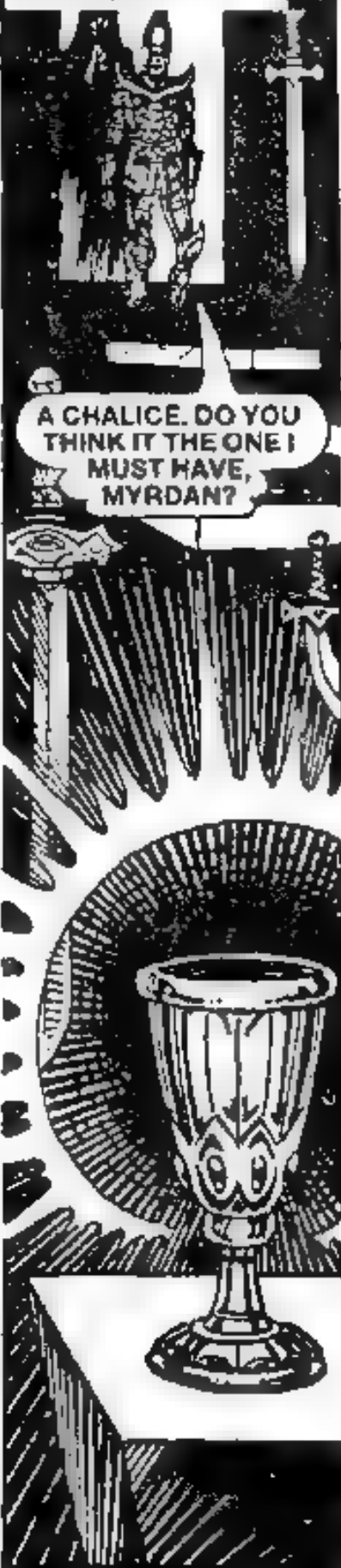
ABRUPTLY, THE PILE OF ROCKS SEEMED TO CHANGE—



VISHENAI
THE CASTLE!

I TOLD YOU NOTHING
HERE WAS WHAT IT
SEEMED, HIGHNESS.

INSIDE THE STRANGE
CASTLE, THEY FOUND IT
ODDLY QUIET.



A CHALICE. DO YOU
THINK IT THE ONE I
MUST HAVE,
MYRDAN?

I'D BEST TAKE IT ...
WHAT WAS THAT
NOISE?

AS KURDIS LIFTED THE CHALICE, IT BURST INTO
DAZZLING FIRE — AND AN INHUMAN ROARING ECHOED
FROM SOMEWHERE DEEP IN THE CASTLE ...

... AND THEN A GROTESQUE
GIANT BURST INTO THE
DUSTY HALL, BELLOWING
DEAFENINGLY.

THE ROARING GIANT!

AYE — NOW I RECALL THE
CREATURE FROM MY
CERASTES MEMORIES!
CREATED EONS AGO BY A
FORGOTTEN RACE, AND
IMMUNE TO ALL
CONJURINGS! THIS SWORD
WILL HAVE TO SUFFICE.



KURDIS LEAPT AT THE
CREATURE, SWINGING HIS
BORROWED BLADE.

MYRDAN! GUARD THE CHALICE!

AS A HUGE BLOW SHATTERED THE
BENCH, KURDIS LEAPT HIGH,
AIMING HIS SWORD AT THE
SPUTTERING FIREBALL.

THRUSTING HARD, THE PRINCE'S BLADE SLID
DEEP INTO THE BLAZING SPHERE, AND A GOUT
OF FLAME SPURTED LIKE MOLTEN BLOOD. THE
GIANT'S LOUD CRIES BECAME AN EAR-
SPLITTING SCREAM OF RAGE AND PAIN.

AND THEN A TREMENDOUS EXPLOSION
THREW KURDIS OFF, SENDING HIM
SPRAWLING ONTO THE FLOOR.


BOOM!

BY ALL THE GODS! I
THOUGHT THE GOLDEN
ARMOUR AS MUCH A PART
OF ME AS MY FLESH AND
BLOOD!

ARE YOU HURT,
HIGHNESS?

I'LL LIVE, MYRDAN —
THOUGH SITTING WILL
BE AWKWARD FOR A
WEEK OR SO. WAIT! MY
HELM — IT'S ON THE
GIANT...!

FREE OF THE HELM, THE
PRINCE'S FACE HAD ALSO
LOST MUCH OF ITS
ELDRITCH CAST, REVEALING
THE HUMAN BENEATH.



AYE, PRINCE KURDIS. THERE IS A CURSE PLACED AROUND THE ROARING GIANT. TO STOP IT YOU MUST DESTROY ITS HEAD — BUT IN SO DOING, YOU WILL LOSE YOUR OWN. YOU WERE UNIQUE, WITH EFFECTIVELY TWO HEADS, AND NOW, THE GIANT WEARS CERASTES' GOLDEN HELM. KURDIS D'ANNEMARC BEGINS TO RE-EMERGE.

■ THEY LEFT THE CASTLE, KURDIS BEGAN TO UNDERSTAND SOME OF THE TRUE DANGERS OF HIS QUEST FOR THE FIRST TIME.

ONCE THEY WERE ABOARD THE CRYSTAL BOAT AGAIN, IT BEGAN TO DRIFT PURPOSEFULLY AWAY.




WHERE TO THIS TIME, I WONDER, MYRDAN?

I'M AS UNCERTAIN AS YOURSELF, HIGHNESS. UNLIKE PAST EXPLOITS I HAVE NO CONTROL OVER THE POWERS WHO MOVE

US.



AS THE BOAT SAILED ON, THE
SCENES SHIFTED CONSTANTLY,
LEAVING KURDIS DIZZY WITH
THE ENDLESS PROGRESSION OF
WONDERS.




AND EVENTUALLY, THEY
SEEMED TO NEAR
A DESTINATION.

COULD THIS BE
IT, MYRDAN?

I BELIEVE SO,
HIGHNESS. NOW THE
TRUE TEST OF YOUR
METTLE WILL BEGIN.



A TRUE TEST? JUST WHAT
AM I GOING TO MEET IN
HERE, MYRDAN?

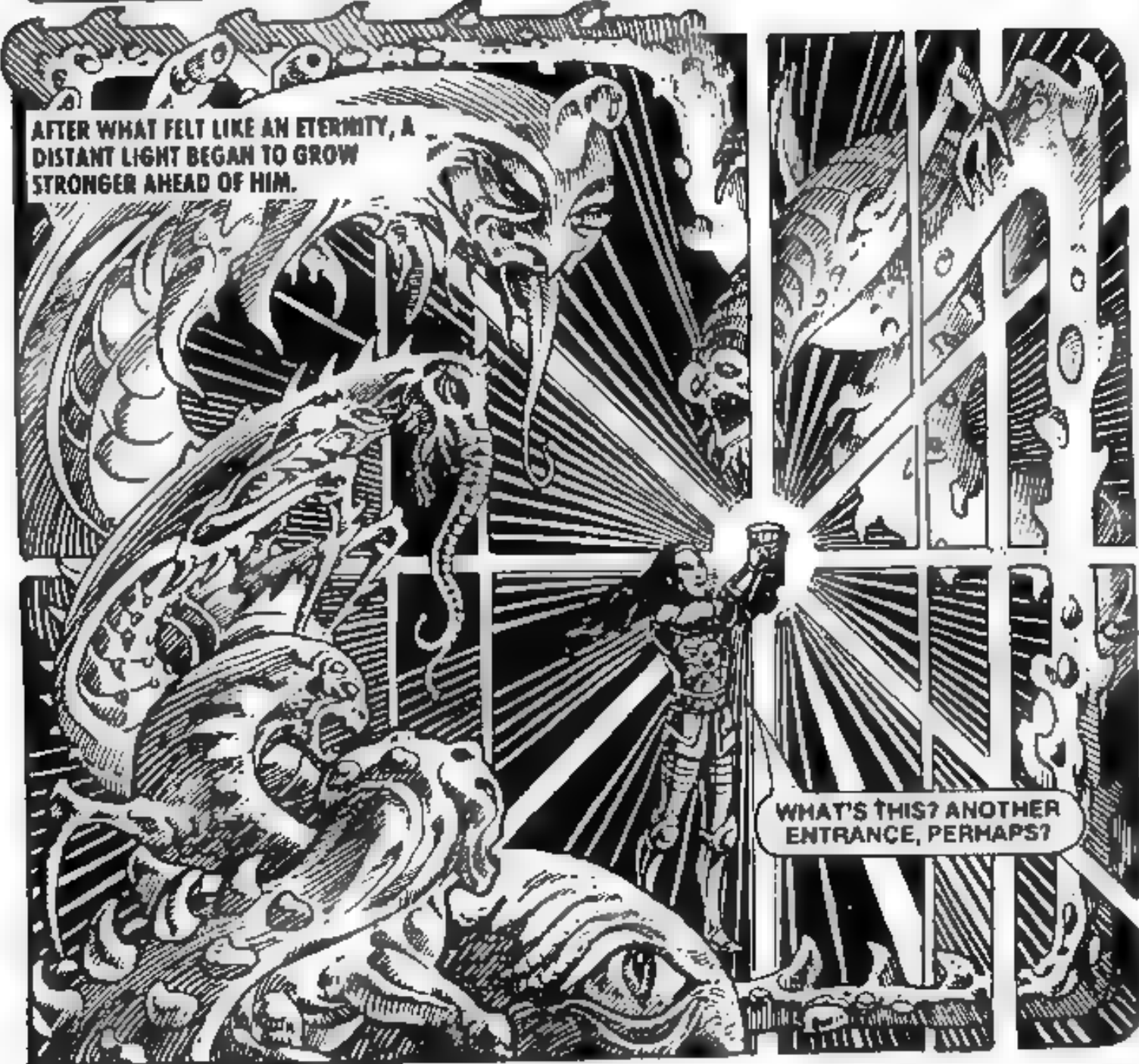


BUT WHATEVER YOU
FIND, IT CAN ONLY BE
YOUR WORST ENEMY!

ONLY YOU CAN KNOW
THAT, HIGHNESS. TAKE THE
CHALICE, YOU WILL NEED
IT — I CAN GO NO FURTHER.

A CHEERING THOUGHT.

KURDIS MOVED DEEPER INTO THE CAVERN,
ACCOMPANIED ONLY BY ECHOES.



AFTER WHAT FELT LIKE AN ETERNITY, A
DISTANT LIGHT BEGAN TO GROW
STRONGER AHEAD OF HIM.

WHAT'S THIS? ANOTHER
ENTRANCE, PERHAPS?

■ STEPPED INTO A BRIGHTLY-LIT GROTTO, AND SAW HE WAS NO LONGER ALONE.



MY OWN WORST ENEMY! MYSELF!

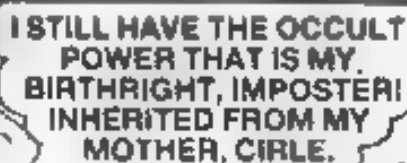


AS SPELLS WERE CONJURED AND Warded, CHARGING THE VERY AIR, KURDIS REALISED THIS TRULY WAS HIS WORST ENEMY — A KURDIS FULLY OWNED BY THE EVIL OF CERASTES' POWER, KURDIS THE CHAOS-CREATURE!

YOU CANNOT WIN, PRINCE — THE BODY OF CERASTES NO LONGER PROTECTS YOU FULLY. HIS MEMORIES ARE NO LONGER YOURS!



KURDIS COULD FEEL SOME OF HIS POWERS...



I STILL HAVE THE OCCULT
POWER THAT IS MY
BIRTHRIGHT, IMPOSTER!
INHERITED FROM MY
MOTHER, CIRLE.

NOT FOR MUCH LONGER,
HUMAN — AND NOT
ENOUGH!

A POWERFUL SPELL SUDDENLY BROKE THROUGH THE
PRINCE'S GUARD, STRIKING THE CHALICE WITH A
BELL-LIKE SOUND.

THEN, AN UNCANNY
TRANSFORMATION TOOK
PLACE ...

... AS THE CHALICE BECAME
A GREAT GOLDEN
BATTLEBLADE.

THE GOLDEN SWORD
ITSELF BY ALL THE
GODS — BY
ABSORBING
CERASTES' OWN
POWER, THE CHALICE
HAS BECOME THE
DEMON SWORD.

VISHENA!

AYE, HUMAN — DID
YOU NOT REALISE
THAT ONLY CHAOS
MAY HOPE TO
DEFEAT CHAOS!


SWINGING THE GREAT SWORD
RECKLESSLY, KURDIS CHARGED HIS
EVIL TWIN ...

THEN LET IT
END HERE!

... AND A FEARFUL
DETONATION OF OCCULT
ENERGY SHATTERED THE
GROTTO AS GOLDEN SWORD
MET GOLDEN ARMOUR.

OUTSIDE, MYRDAN WAS ALARMED
BY THE DEAFENING SOUNDS.

HIGHNESS?
PRINCE KURDIS?



I AM HERE, MYRDAN —
THOUGH I DO NOT
PRETEND TO
UNDERSTAND WHAT
HAPPENED. SOMEHOW,
CERASTES WAS USED
TO DESTROY HIMSELF.

■ MYRDAN HELPED THE
WEAK PRINCE BACK TO THE
BOAT, THE GHOST OF KING
VEYNE REAPPEARED.

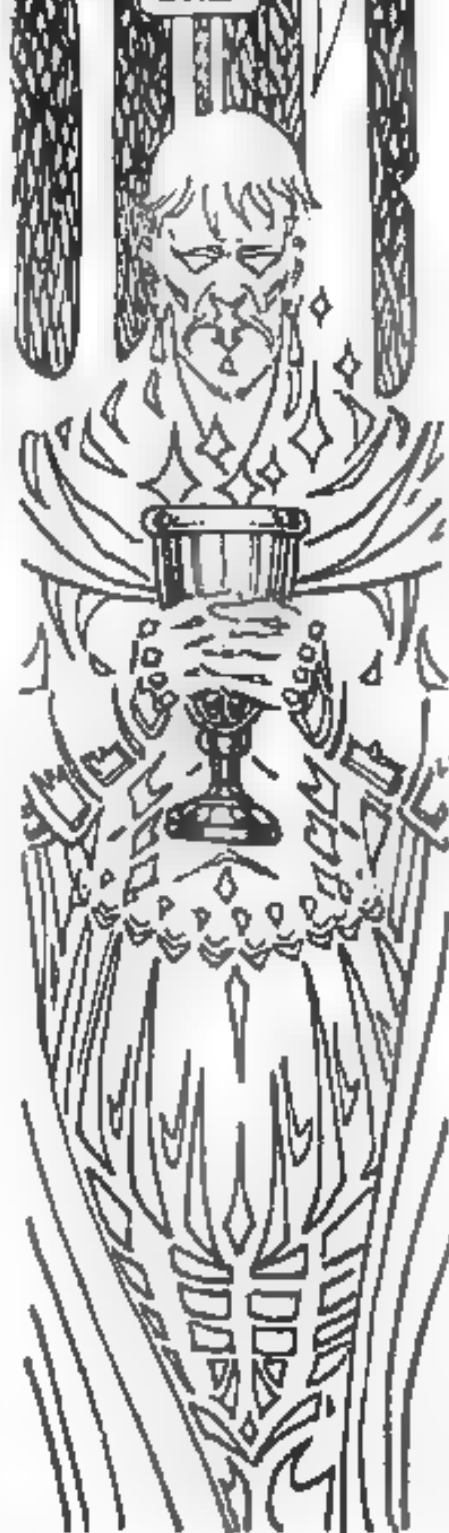
FATHER — I
SUCCEEDED!
CERASTES' TAIN IS
GONE FOREVER!




A YE, MY SON,
PRAISE THE GODS.
AND MY THANKS TO
YOU, MYRDAN, FOR
YOUR SUPPORT.
RETURN YOU NOW
TO ILLONDRE, AND
WREST THE CROWN
FROM BLEYS'
UNWORTHY
FINGERS. I WILL
TAKE THE CHALICE
OF DESTINY.

A NEW PRINCE STAGGERED FROM THE
CAVE. GONE WAS THE MAGICAL
ARMOUR OF GOLD, AND WITH IT ALL OF
HIS CHAOS-BRED MAGIC. KURDIS WAS
TRULY HUMAN.

THE GOLDEN
LIQUID IS ALL THAT
REMAINS OF THE
CREATURE
CERASTES: HIS
ESSENCE. I WILL
RETURN IT TO
VISHENA, FOR THE
DEMON WAS STILL
A SERVANT OF THE
GODS, DESPITE HIS
EVIL





YOU ARE VISHENA'S
CHAMPION NOW,
KURDIS. THE
D'ANNEMARCS HAVE
BEEN CHOSEN BY THE
GODS. DO NOT
DISGRACE THEM. I BID
YOU FAREWELL, MY
SON, UNTIL WE ARE
REUNITED ETERNALLY.

AS VEYNE'S GHOST FADED INTO THE
ASTRAL SKY, THE CRYSTAL BOAT BEGAN
TO DRIFT BACK TO WHERE THEIR JOURNEY
HAD BEGUN.

AS THEY RE-EMERGED ON THE SNOWY PEAK IN THE PYARE MOUNTAINS, THE EVENTS IN THE ASTRAL PLANE BEGAN TO FEEL MORE LIKE A VIVID DREAM TO KURDIS.

HIGHNESS! MYRDANI
THANK THE GODS
YOU'RE SAFE!

DIVING INTO THE SNOW, THEY WERE
NARROWLY MISSED BY GLEAMING
TALONS.

PRINCE KURDIS!
ABOVE YOU!

HURLING SILENTLY OUT OF THE
FRIGID SKY, THE TRANSFORMED
HARPY THAT HAD ONCE BEEN
QUEEN MAGETTA DIVED STRAIGHT
FOR KURDIS.

VISHENAI WHAT
MANNER OF BEAST ... ?

MORE SORCERY, HIGHNESS!
A HARPY, TRANSFORMED
OUT OF SOME POOR HAPLESS
WOMAN!

TAKE THIS — ONE
OF THE SWORDS
OF FATE, IT WILL
SUCCEED WHERE
ORDINARY STEEL
CANNOT.

MERCIFUL GODS!
IT'S MAGETTA!
MY STEP-MOTHER!

IT WAS, HIGHNESS
— HER SOUL NO
LONGER
CONTROLS THAT
MONSTER. ONLY
DEATH CAN FREE
HER NOW.

NO, MYRDANI! KILL
MY FATHER'S WIFE?
I CANNOT!

YOU HAVE NO CHOICE,
HIGHNESS! AND THIS
CREATURE IS NO
LONGER MAGETTA OF
SUVETHIA!

KURDIS DODGED A SECOND ATTACK, BUT
KNEW A THIRD STRIKE WOULD SURELY
FIND HIM.

IN A BLIND, UNTHINKING MOTION, KURDIS LEAPT TO HIS FEET BEFORE THE SWOOPING HARPY, SWORD UPRaised.



DAMN YOUR BLACK SOUL TO THE DEEPEST PIT OF HELL, BLEYS!

AS THE CREATURE STRUCK, MYRDAN'S BLACK RAPIER SANK TO THE HILT THROUGH ITS METALLIC FEATHERS, AND BOTH MAN AND BEAST CRASHED TO THE SNOW.



FORGIVE ME, MAgETTA. I COULD DO NOTHING ELSE.



YOU'VE RELEASED HER, HIGHNESS. BLEYS HAD DESTROYED HER LONG AGO.



THEY HELPED KURDIS TO HIS FEET AND LED HIM BACK FROM THE TERRIBLE CARCASE.

AS THE QUEEN DIED, SHE SLOWLY RETURNED TO HER OWN SHAPE, A PLACID SMILE ON HER LIPS.

THANK YOU, KURDIS — I AM FREE, NOW, AND BLAME YOU FOR NOUGHT. BUT TELL BLEYS I DIED CURSING HIM ...

ANOTHER LIFE THAT BLEYS WILL PAY FOR!


AYE, HIGHNESS. SO WE MUST REACH HIM BEFORE WORD OF THIS DOES.

AS THE MAGICIAN RAISED HIS HAND, GREAT FORCES WERE LET LOOSE ON THE MOUNTAIN TOP ...

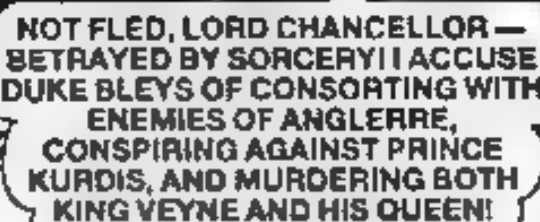
... FORCES THAT CAST THEM BACK TO ILLONDRE AND INTO THE THRONE ROOM ITSELF.

IT APPEARS WE ARRIVE NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON, HIGHNESS. UNLESS MY EYES DECEIVE ME, BLEYS IS ABOUT TO BE OFFERED A CROWN!

KURDIS! MYRDANI NO — YOU'RE DEAD, ALL OF YOU!



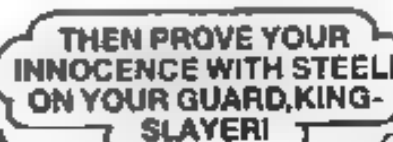
CAN THIS TRULY BE YOU, PRINCE KURDIS? BUT DUKE BLEYS IS ABOUT TO BE OFFERED THE CROWN, SINCE QUEEN MAGETTA HAS SEEMINGLY FLED.



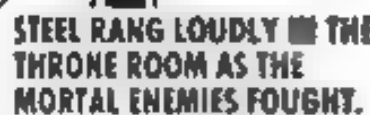
NOT FLED, LORD CHANCELLOR — BETRAYED BY SORCERY! I ACCUSE DUKE BLEYS OF CONSORTING WITH ENEMIES OF ANGLERRE, CONSPIRING AGAINST PRINCE KURDIS, AND MURDERING BOTH KING VEYNE AND HIS QUEEN!



WHERE IS YOUR PROOF?



THEN PROVE YOUR INNOCENCE WITH STEEL! ON YOUR GUARD, KING-SLAYER!



STEEL RANG LOUDLY IN THE THRONE ROOM AS THE MORTAL ENEMIES FOUGHT.



CHA'ITAN TAKE YOUR SOUL, KURDIS! FYLORIX! AID ME!

SO WE ARE
DISCOVERED, MY LORD
DUKE? THEN THE
WIZARDRY OF
SUVETHIA HAD BEST
RID THE WORLD OF ALL
HERE PRESENT!



MEN FELL BACK ■ THE SORCERER GATHERED
POWER AROUND HIS STAFF.

BUT MYRDAN WAS FASTER — CONJURING
AN OCCULT NET THAT SWAMPED THE
SUVETHIAN, LEAVING HIM BOUND AND
UNABLE TO INTERFERE.

NOT SO, DEMONSPAWN!
YOUR PUPPET INVOKED
THE DUNOOR CONVENTION
— LET HIM DEFEND HIS
TREACHERY MAN TO MAN
— WITHOUT SORCERY!

DO YOU HEAR, KING-SLAYER?
YOU CAN'T HIDE BEHIND
YOUR SORCERER'S SKIRTS
ANYMORE! YOUR AUNT
CURSED YOU WITH HER
DYING BREATH! MY FATHER'S
GHOST DEMANDS
VENGEANCE! HOW MANY
MORE CRIMES CRY OUT FOR
YOUR HEAD, COUSIN?

THIS IS A TRICK! YOU STILL
HAVE SORCEROUS
POWERS! NO MAN WOULD
GIVE UP THAT FOR AN
EARTHLY CROWN!

BLEYS RETREATED BEFORE THE SAVAGERY OF
THE PRINCE'S ATTACK.

SUDDENLY, THE DUKE HURLED A TALL
CANDELABRA AT KURDIS — AND THE
PRINCE WAS FORCED TO LEAP ASIDE.

THE THRONE! IT IS MINE
BY RIGHT! I WILL HAVE
IT!

HERE, COUSIN — TASTE A
LITTLE FLAME BEFORE
HELL-FIRE TAKES YOU!

BLEYS RACED TOWARDS THE DISTANT
CHAIR, HEEDLESS OF THOSE AROUND
HIM.

YOU SEE! YOU
SEE! IT IS MINE!

ENJOY IT WHILE
YOU CAN, USURPER!

KURDIS DREW BACK HIS ARM, AND
HURLED MYRDAN'S BLACK SWORD
WITH ALL HIS STRENGTH,

THE BLACK BLADE CRASHED INTO HIS CHEST, IMPALING HIM LIKE AN INSECT AGAINST THE BACK OF THE THRONE.

BUT WHILST EVERYONE WAS DISTRACTED BY BLEY'S DEFEAT...

MYRDAN'S PETTY CONJURING MAY CONSTRICT ME A LITTLE, BUT IT CANNOT PREVENT MY ESCAPING BELOW IT WHILST THE FOOLS REJOICE.

YOU HAVE COME THROUGH MUCH, AND TRIUMPHED, HIGHNESS. MY CONGRATULATIONS. OR RATHER — SHOULD I SAY, YOUR MAJESTY?

NOT YET, MYRDAN. I HAVE FOUGHT FOR AND WON BACK A THRONE — YET I AM LOATHE TO OCCUPY IT.

THE CHANCELLOR SPLUTTERED IN SURPRISE AT THE PRINCE'S WORDS.

BUT HIGHNESS —
YOUR MAJESTY —
THE THRONE IS
YOURS! ANGLERRE
MUST HAVE A KING!

WHAT DO YOU SAY,
MYRDAN? AND
YOU'D BETTER
HAVE THIS BACK.

THE LAST TIME YOU
WERE LESS EAGER
FOR MY
ASCENSION AS I
RECALL, MY LORD
CHANCELLOR. BUT
I HAVE SEEN A
LITTLE OF THE
WORLD OUT THERE,
AND I WANT TO SEE
MORE. I SHALL
RETURN TO BE
CROWNED — IN A
YEAR OR SO,
PERHAPS. IN THE
MEANWHILE, YOU
CAN BE REGENT —
OR PERHAPS
MYRDAN, HERE.

KEEP IT FOR NOW,
HIGHNESS — IT'S A HERO'S
SWORD, AND IF I'M GOING
TO WATCH OVER YOUR
CROWN FOR YOU WHILST
YOU'RE OFF ENJOYING THE
WORLD, I DOUBT I'LL BE
NEEDING IT.

AS THE COURTIERS MADE WAY
FOR THEM, KURDIS AND
EWAN LEFT THE THRONE
ROOM — AND A PERPLEXED
LORD CHANCELLOR.

IN ALL MY YEARS
I'VE NEVER KNOWN
THE LIKE!

LET THEM BE, LORD
CHANCELLOR.
THEY ARE YOUNG
— AND THE PRINCE
HAS NEVER KNOWN
A TRUE
CHILDHOOD. LEAVE
THEM TO MAKE
SPORT WHILE THEY
MAY.



**DON'T
MISS**

**THIS MONTH'S OTHER
ACTION-PACKED
ADVENTURE**

STARBLAZER

FANTASY FICTION IN PICTURES NUMBER 251

32p



**SONG OF
THE SWORD**

NOW ON SALE

SUN PRINCE

It had been twenty years since the wars of chaos in the Kingdom of Anglerre. King Veyhe D'Annemarc now ruled in peace over his people. But the king was ever wary, fearful of a deadly intrusion from the spirit worlds. But he was looking in the wrong direction, for it was from within that danger and death came — danger that set his son, Kurdis, on a quest to rid himself of the very powers that made him all but immortal.

